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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0214

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 002430

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NEA/ELA MATTHEW IRWIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2022

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SUBJECT: EU BORDER MISSION FOR LEBANON: AUSTRIA IN THE EU
HERD

REF: STATE 128335

Classified By: A/DCM Dean Yap. Reason: 1.4(b) and (d)

(C) A/DCM and PolOff met 9/17 with Austrian MFA Middle East Department Director Ralph Scheide and senior staffer Wolfgang Lapuh to discuss, inter alia, reftel demarche. Lapuh reported that Austria is comfortable with the EU consensus position in support of a well-structured fact-finding mission and indicated that the main unresolved issue was the question of timing, on which he said Austria is agnostic. He did indicate that Austria placed some credence in the analysis that Syria is reasonably serious about cooperating on border monitoring and said that, if the political process in Lebanon works, he believed a mission will be organized. Such a mission would be tasked with evaluating Syria's willingness to resume border delineation, Lapuh thought. He reported that he expected no definite decision on the fact-finding Mission until the October GAERC. The next PC might, he suggested, task Solana with preparing draft terms of reference for the fact-finders.
McCaw